



State Senator

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VALDE GARCIA

Serving the 22nd District

Shiawassee-Livingston-southern Ingham counties

Coffee Break News

GOP agenda announced

Senate Republican's this week announced their 2004 agenda, "Working Today for Michigan's Tomorrow." The bold legislative agenda focuses on creating jobs, strengthening families and continuing to improve the quality of Michigan schools while also bringing state spending in line with existing revenues. The agenda is based on Michigan's priorities including: improving Michigan's competitiveness; protecting families from health threats, criminal predators and unfair financial burdens; stretching education dollars to ensure Michigan's children get the best education; preserving Michigan's beauty through land-use regulations, promoting recycling and limiting out-of-state trash; and building a healthy Michigan by lowering healthcare costs while increasing accessibility, reducing state spending, and continuing Senate oversight of government activities. In addition, the Senate plans to announce JOBS II, which picks up where JOBS (Job Opportunities for Business Success) left off at the end of last year. The goal is to position Michigan as quickly as possible to take advantage the national economic recovery.

Governor appointed state superintendent

Measures were introduced in the Legislature this week to amend the Michigan Constitution to give the governor the power to appoint the state superintendent of public instruction. If voters approve the measure, Michigan would join 10 other states, including Pennsylvania and Texas, in which the governor appoints the superintendent of education. In a majority of states, the governor appoints members to the state board of education and/or approves the appointment of the superintendent by the state board. If two-thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives approve the measure, it would go before voters at the Nov. 2 election. The proposal is supported by some current and past members of the state board of education.

New specialty license plates

Two bills were introduced this week in the Senate to create specialty fund-raising license plates for the United Negro College Fund and Habitat for Humanity. Senate Bill 957 would create a plate for the United Negro College Fund and SB 958 would create one for Habitat for Humanity. The fee for a specialty plate is \$35 in addition to the annual registration fee. The organizations receive \$25 for each plate sold. The United Negro College Fund is the nation's oldest minority higher-education assistance organization. It raises money for 39 member colleges and universities and awards financial assistance to students. Habitat for Humanity is an international, nonprofit, ecumenical Christian organization that helps provide housing to those in need. Volunteers build the homes and donate materials for the construction. People receiving homes help build the home as well. The Michigan Habitat organization built 209 homes in 2002. In 2003, they celebrated the construction of the 2,000th home in Michigan.

Senate commits to water regulations

Senate Republicans are committed to writing solid water-regulation laws based on scientific fact. These laws will clearly define Michigan's policies on water withdrawal for the many different constituencies that use the water. Legislators say that if not drawn up carefully, new regulations could inadvertently damage areas that cannot support any withdrawals while restricting access to those areas that could sustain some activity. In order to properly determine what areas are eligible for withdrawal, a study is being conducted to map Michigan's aquifers. The results of this study will be used to construct the much-needed regulations to control the usage of Michigan waters.